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Western Europe: Human Rights Policies

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An Intelligence Assessment

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EUR 83-10179X
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Western Europe: Human Rights Policies

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [] Office
of European Analysis. Comments and queries are
welcome and may be directed to the Chief,
European Issues Division, EURA, []

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The Major Countries:**The Primacy of Pragmatism**

Generally, the major West European countries—
West Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, and

France

Pragmatism has also been the principal characteristic
of the major countries' human rights policies in Latin
America and Africa

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Although the major countries generally have played down the human rights violations of governments with which they need to maintain good relations, public opinion has sometimes forced them to take a stronger stand. Intense public interest in the fate of Italian nationals missing in Argentina, for example, caused the Italian Government to make strong protests to the Argentine regime despite Italy's big economic stake in that country. Italian parliamentarians went to Argentina to investigate the missing persons issue, and the Foreign Ministry made clear to Buenos Aires that future trade between the two countries will depend on Argentine progress toward democracy. 3.5(c)

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Sanctions against Argentina—which were placed in response to the Argentine invasion of the Falklands and had only an indirect relationship to human rights issues—also lacked force. Import restrictions did not cover previously signed contracts and were terminated after less than two months. Italy and Ireland refused to suspend trade with Argentina even during the course of the war. Ireland cited its military neutrality—antipathy toward the United Kingdom undoubtedly played a role as well—and Italy claimed that its manufacturing sectors would be damaged if imports of leather and other goods were suddenly interrupted.

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In fact, the European Community has imposed economic sanctions against certain countries, but generally these measures have been mild and have not been implemented Community-wide.

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